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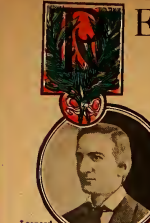
REGISTERS OF LINCOLN'S PERSONALITY

INTERESTING REMINISCENCE BY DOUGLAS VOLK, SON OF LEONARD W. VOLK, WHO MADE LIFE MASKS OF THE MARTYRED PRESIDENT.



Leonard W. Volk

which is upon this page. He is a kindly, courteous man of about fifty, with easy, placid ways and a low, agreeable tone of voice. He is very generously willing to tell of the circumstances surrounding his father's acquaintance with Lincoln and of the making of the cross and bust. These casts were described by Truman Bartlett in the "Life of Lincoln" with which his was connected) as the second event in the history of American art. He held the first to be the taking of the Houdin mask of Washington.

Mr. Volk sat back upon his chair-stool, regarding the cast which was before him, said—

"After making many studies of Lincoln's head, the thing which strikes us most forcibly about it is the superb harmony which exists between its different parts. Every apparent exaggeration is beautifully balanced by adjacent forms and proportions. Lincoln was the fine and impasing in a stature way in which a mountain is beautiful, with all its crags and gullies.

"At the same time, however, I am aware that the general view is that, according to conventional standards of beauty, Lincoln was a homely man. In this relation my father used to tell an exciting experience.

"He was surprised by the visit one day of a little nervous man bolting from Oshkosh, Wis., who abruptly walked into his studio, saying that a clerk in his dry goods store wanted him to hand Father his first statuette of Douglas. The little man remarked that he was a republican himself and asked if father had anything of Lincoln. It was soon after the time of the sitting, and father showed him the recently completed bust of Lincoln. He looked at it a moment and then said, 'Well—he's too d— homely to buy, but I'll vote for him just the same' and out he went.

"My father's first meeting with Lincoln was in 1858. He was with Douglas' party during the 'debates' on one occasion when they stopped at Bloomington. The party went to the only hotel. While there were sitting in the office, after supper, Lincoln entered. My father used to describe him as having an old carpet bag in his hand and a weather beaten silk hat on his head, apparently far too large for him. He had a long, loosely fitting frock coat of black alpaca, with a vest and trousers of the same material. He walked up to the counter, passed the carpet bag over and asked pleasantly if he was late for supper. The clerk replied that he was, but thought that something might be 'scared up.'

His Cordial Greeting.

"'All right,' said Lincoln, 'I don't want much.'

"His clothes were very dusty, and he commenced to dust himself when several of his friends rushed in to see him. 'How are you, Old Abe?' was the way they greeted him. Lincoln shook each hand with both of his, in his usual way. His walk was of the broadest and pleasantest kind. It was the first time my father had seen him closely. On the following day he met him.

"At Springfield my father got another impression of Lincoln which he never forgot. The train had stopped and the people ran in the direction of the stages which had been erected at some distance off. Most of them climbed the fence and crossed the field to take a short cut. Lincoln went, too, and my father drew a word picture of the tall, lean figure, of immense strides, with the carpet bag and umbrella, and coat tails flying in the breeze. The quaint, angular form, with the head craned forward, appeared to him to be much over the balance, like the leaning Tower of Pisa. My father tried to keep pace with that furious speed over the stubble field, till Lincoln came to a full freeze. He lost sight of him then. The angular figure had leaped over it so nimbly.

"Father heard him speak the same evening. The impression which Lincoln's manner of speech made upon him was of something very deliberate and earnest. He seemed to detect a note of sadness in the voice."

Two years afterward Mr. Volk saw him again. He was in a carriage conducting a new case. The young sculptor determined that he would remind him of his promise.

"I found him in the United States District Court," is the elder Volk's description of the circumstance.

"He had his feet on the edge of the table and his long, dark hair stuck out about like as if it had been uncombed for a week."

He greeted the sculptor cordially, smiling at him with his beautiful dark eyes. He remembered his promise and it was arranged that he should come to the studio the following Thursday.

"But I'll have to go to a barber and have my hair cut before I come," he said.

"I told him that I would rather he would leave it as it was," the sculptor is related to have remarked. But Lincoln would not consent to this.

On the appointed morning he appeared punctually. It was one of his characteristics that he never failed to be on time.

The sculptor came to be able to recognize his footstope upon the stairs leading to the studio. Lincoln came up at a great rate, taking two or three steps at a time.

"Mr. Volk, I have never before sat to sculptor or painter. What shall I do?" he asked.

Taking the Mask.

He was told that measurements only were to be taken upon the first occasion. On the second visit the mask was to be taken. He was to have his face anointed very lightly with oil. The hair about the temples and forehead was to be matted down with lard. The plaster of paris was then to be mixed with water till it should become about the consistency of thick cream. He was to be covered with a sheet in order to keep the plaster confined to his head. The plaster was to be poured on with a spoon till it should cover the face, saving only the nostrils and eyes.

The plaster, having become hardened, was to be gently freed from the face and an encumbrance would was to be obtained. This was to be allowed to become perfectly dry and liquid plaster was to be poured into it. When this should become hard enough the outer mould was to be chipped off and a perfect reproduction of the face was to be revealed.

It was about an hour from the time of starting that the cast was ready for removal. It was a complete cast in one piece and had been perfect. It clung tightly to the cheeks, and Lincoln took the mould within his hands, held his head low and worked it steadily off. A few bits in the temples stuck to the plaster and were dropped out. Lincoln's eyes watered, but he rejoiced his good humor, which Mr. Volk found to be invariable.

On the Sunday Lincoln said that he had been invited to church. "But," said he, "I thought I'd rather come and sit for the bust. The first is," he continued, "I don't like to hear old and tried sermons. So, when I hear a man preach I like to see him act as if he were fighting bees!" As he said this he extended his long arms and curled his fingers to suit his words. That day he sat for the bust for more than four hours.

During the continuance of the sittings he told funny stories almost unceasingly. But he talked little of religion or politics. He complained that at any public place people would "pitch into him on politics."

On the last occasion Lincoln came in a little out of a hurry. Mr. Volk had finished his head, but wished to suggest something of the broad shoulders which Lincoln had given the great Republican. Lincoln obediently stripped off coat, waistcoat, shirt and turned his undershirt down exposing the shoulders above the back. In this way he patiently posed for an hour.

The sculptor, intent upon his work, did not notice his dressing again, and Lincoln left hurriedly after sending out a cordial "Goodby, I will see you again soon." A few moments after the departure there were heard rapidly thumping upon the stairs again. He burst into the room.

Forgetfulness in Dress.

"Hello, Mr. Volk," he called out, laughing. "I found on the sidewalk that I had forgotten to put on my undershirt, and I thought it wouldn't do to go through the streets in this way."

Soon enough, the sleeves of his singlet were dangling beneath the skirts of his frock coat. Mr. Volk helped him to dress, and the next manner of his departure was thoroughly conventional.

The cast of the stirrings which resulted in the creation of the well known bust, one of the very few, possibly two or three, in existence modeled directly from life. The celebrated sculptor T. D. Palmer and other judges have pronounced it the standard bust of Lincoln. Certain it is that it has been used by numerous sculptors as a basis for later representations of Lincoln.

The bust was exhibited at the Paris Exposition of 1867. Copies of it are in the White House at Washington and other public places.

As a work of art it is thoroughly sculptoresque in style and possesses all the indications of being a most accurate presentment of the great man as he was before the mummation, or before the heavy cares of State had added other furrows to that placid brow, though never hardening the lines of those human lips.

Two days after the termination Mr. Volk took casts of Lincoln's hands, the results of which are now in his son's studio. It was at Lincoln's home. The sculptor wished him to hold something in his hand. Lincoln went to the washroom and the saw was heard to go. He returned to the sitting-room wielding off a piece of broom handle. Mr. Volk told him there was no necessity to do this.

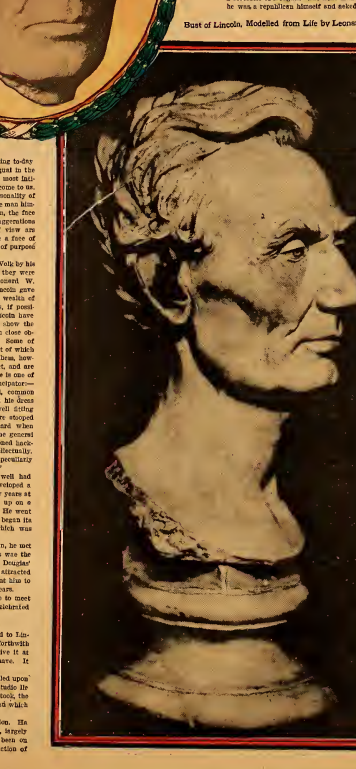
"Oh, well," said he, "I thought I would like to have it fine."

As the casts to be seen in Mr. Douglas Volk's studio the right hand appears swollen as compared with the left. It was the penalty of success. The excessive handshaking of the day before had produced it.

The studio which the sculptor made is now in the palatial home of his son in Northside. The elder Volk had the identical block upon which and a pair of newly made boots of Lincoln's in these were delivered by fire. The original casts were saved, however, as Mr. Volk always carried them about with him while travelling. They were in Rome at the time of the fire. They have crossed the ocean four times and now belong to the United States government.

Mr. Volk possesses a wealth of remithcence concerning these broken objects which is out of the power of any other man to give. And it is with a thrill that one thinks that this plaster face before one is like for like the face of the great American in the time of his prime, and that perhaps in thousands of years the future race may look upon it, and with its help almost see him live again.

Lie Mask made by Leonard W. Volkin 1850



Bust of Lincoln. Modelled from Life by Leonard W. Volk

Casts of Lincoln's Hands Made in 1850.

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JOHN H. SURRATT'S Story of His Relations with BOOTH and His Flight to Canada.

"On a day which was then present, and at an hour which had come and gone, the most hellish of deeds was to be enacted,"—John H. Surratt, in telling how he received the news of the execution of his mother.

JOHN H. SURRATT, intimate of John Wilkes Booth and the son of Mrs. Surratt, who was hanged for alleged complicity in the assassination of President Lincoln, never proposed a manuscript explicitly setting forth his personal knowledge of that affair. Probably so his of more intimate interesting relation to the events that let up to the most greatest tragedy ever has been written.

The manuscript was send by Surratt himself, in 1870, to "a rural audience gathered in the musty old Court House of a small Maryland town, Rockville, twenty miles out of Washington.

Recently this time perfained manuscript was dug from the ancient files of the village records and is here reproduced.

By John H. Surratt.

AT the breaking out of the war I was a student at St. Charles College, in Maryland, and did not remain long there after that important event. I left in July, 1861, and privately home commenced to take active part in the stirring events of that period. I was not more than eighteen years of age, and was mostly engaged in sending information regarding the movement of the United States troops stationed in Washington and elsewhere, and carrying despatches to Confederate heads on the Potomac.

In the fall of 1864 I was introduced to John Wilkes Booth, whom I was given to understand, wished to know something about the main avenue leading from Washington to the Potomac. We met several times, but as he seemed to be very reticent with regard to his purposes and was desirous to get all the information out of me he could, I refused to tell him anything of it.

At last I said to him—"It is useless for you, Mr. Booth, to seek further information from me at all. I know who you are and what are your intentions."

He hesitated some time, but said he would make known his views to me provided I would promise secrecy. I replied I will do nothing of the kind. You know well I am a Southern man. If you cannot trust me we will separate."

Booth's Plans.

He then said—"I will confide my plans to you, but before doing so I will make known to you the motive that actuate me. In the Northern prisons are many thousands of our men whom the United States government refused to exchange. You know as well as I do the cruel sufferings they are undergoing, and the deaths they are compelled to undergo. We are daily in want of clothes and medicines. We cannot procure them, whereas the United States government is willing to let its own soldiers remain in our prisons because she has no need of them. I have a proposition to submit to you which I think if we can carry out would bring about the desired exchange.

There was a long and anxious silence, which I at last was compelled to break by asking—"Well, sir, what is your proposition?" He sat quiet for an instant and then, before answering me, arose and looked under the bed, into the window, to see whether I was in the passageway, and then said—"We will have to be careful what we say, for the time draws on fast when close to an end is a whisper said, "It is to kidnap President Lincoln and carry him off to Richmond."

After two days' reflection I told him I was willing to try it. So I was put to work. I was known in the South as striking for independence. I had no hesitation in taking part in anything honorable that might tend toward the accomplishment of that object. Such a thing as the assassination of Mr. Lincoln was not heard spoken by any of the parties—never!

Booth on several occasions when he had called a meeting in Washington for the purpose of discussing matters in general, or as I would call it, to get more information and received information that there was a plot of the Yankees to kill Mr. Lincoln, and that a number of Booth's friends in the army had written to him, urging him to come on to Washington at once, as they would explained the construction of the gates and that the best thing we could do was to kidnap him and carry out the project. Every one seemed to coincide with my opinion except Booth, who seemed dissatisfied with it.

At last, striking and bringing down his fist on the table, he said—"Well, gentlemen, if the worst comes of the worst I shall know what to do."

Days would pass and nothing but without an opportunity presenting itself for us to attempt the capture. Booth, who was very impatient, at last got the assurance about that a conspiracy of some kind was being concocted in Washington.

We had all arrangements perfected from Washington to the Potomac. We were to cross over in small boats as across the river. One day we received information that the President would visit the Soldiers' Home to-night for the purpose of being present at an entertainment to be given at the theatre. In the evening of the same day I took the cars for Montreal, arriving there the next day.

In accordance with General Lee's order I went to Elmira, returning there Wednesday, two days before Mr. Lincoln's death, and registered at the Brainard House, as usual, as "John Harrison." On following day I went to work and made a complete sketch of the town and surroundings. About ten o'clock Friday night I retired, little thinking that on that night a blow would be struck which would forever blast my hopes and make me a wanderer in a foreign land.

I slept the night through and came down the next morning never dreaming as the storm then breaking around my head. When I took my seat at the table about nine o'clock a gentleman at my left remarked, "Have you heard the news?" "No, I have not," I replied. "What is it?" "Why, President Lincoln and Secretary Seward have been assassinated."

I telegraphed Booth thus—"J. W. B. in New York. If you are in New York telegraph me. Signed, John Harrison, Elmira, N. Y." The operator, after looking over it, said, "It is J. W. B.?" to which I replied "Yes." He evidently wanted the whole name and had recently damned telegraphing when a door right near the office and speaking on the street was pushed open and I heard some one say, "Yes, there are three or four brothers of them—John, Junius Brutus, Edwin and J. Wilkes Booth." The whole truth dashed on me in an instant and I said to myself, "My God! I am done! I am done!"

Branded!

On Monday when I was leaving Canandaigua I bought some New York papers. In looking over them my eye lit upon the following paragraph, which I read, but could hardly think I ever will. Secret. I quit. Dispatches of Secretary Seward is said to be John Surratt, a secession accomplice of Southern Marshal. His name, with that of John Wilkes Booth, will forever hold the infamous roll of assassins."

I could scarcely believe my senses. I gazed upon my name, the letters of which seemed to grow as large as mountains and then to dwindle away to nothing. The work for my future connection with him. I thought. After fully realizing the state of the case I concluded to change my course and go direct to Canada. I left Canandaigua Monday at noon, going to Albany, arriving there Tuesday morning in time for breakfast. When I stepped on the platform at the depot at St. Albans I noticed that one of the detectives scanned every one head and foot, myself included. I at once left the train, registering for Lyons. I provided myself with an Oxford cut horse and road to the Canadian line, arriving at that time. I knew my trip to Elmira would be a dangerous one, and I wished to pass myself off as a Canadian, and I succeeded in doing so, as was proved by my witnesses in Montreal. I believe that cannot be satisfactorily proven St. Albans.

The detectives were now hunting me very closely but about the same time I too left Montreal in a buck, going some eight or nine miles down the St. Lawrence River, crossing the stream in a small canoe. I was arrested as a bandit. As there others was arrested at our destination, a small town lying south of Montreal. We entered the village quietly, hoping that no one would see us.

It has been asserted over and over again for the purpose of drawing me in the estimation of every heinous sin that I deserted her who gave me birth in the darkest hour of her need. Truly would I have averted the execution of every man had such been the case. But such was not the case. When I left Montreal there was no cause for uneasiness on my part, and upon my arrival in the country I wrote to my friends to have me posted in regard to the approaching trial and to send me the papers regularly. "He under no appreciation as to my movements or consequences. Reminds perfectly quiet, as my action on your part would only tend to make matters worse. If you can be of any service to us we will let you know. But keep quiet."

These were the instructions I received from my friend in Washington, to whom I felt the strongest affiance, and who I thought would never deceive me. Such was the error of my destruction to John a perfect gentleman on a hunting excursion, while I was writing at the hotel for the mail. On the presentation of me a paper and said—"Read that about the conspirators." I replied that I do not know who I was about although that paragraph now upon me or mine.

That paper contained the first news which was there received and at an hour which I have had cause and goes the most telltale of deeds was to be enacted. It had been determined upon and carried out even before I had information that there was any danger.

Lincoln in Pointed Paragraphs.

By W. W. Aulick.

Don't think because Abraham Lincoln is usually remembered in connection with Illinois that he was a native of that State. He was born in Kentucky, in a Hardin county cabin, the date being February 12, 1809.

His grandfather, also Abraham Lincoln, entered a tract of four hundred acres and built a log cabin near Fort Bezargrass. That site is now occupied by the city of Louisville.

Abraham Lincoln, the grandfather, met a violent death, being killed by an Indian from an ambush.

Thomas Lincoln was the father of the President, and was considered the reverse of distinguished. Nancy Hanks was his mother and was the spotless name of having a scandalously first rate mare named after her.

There were two other children besides Abraham—Sarah, who died in middle life, and Thomas, who lived only a short time.

Nancy Hanks Lincoln died when Abraham was nine years old and as she was brought up under a kind hearted stepmother, his father marrying Mrs. Sally Johnston a year following the death of the first wife.

Young Lincoln read everything that came his way—and that wasn't much, for the Indiana frontier where his father had removed wasn't exactly a literary centre.

When he was nineteen he set out to see the world, via the flatboat route, floating eighteen hundred miles down the creek and rivers to New Orleans.

Before he was twenty-one he was six feet four inches tall and as strong as a grizzly.

He earned six dollars a month as a hired man, and ruined this occupation with that of hog slaughterer. At this he was considered an expert, and was paid the duffership wages of thirty-one cents a day.

He was so strong that it was nothing at all for him to rescue hogs from the quagmires into which they had strayed.

The Lincoln went to Illinois in 1830 and set up housekeeping in a log cabin near Decatur, a district where bears were an average of one fat and knife fight to the minute.

The Lincoln farm annually consisted of a scant pair of trousers attached by a single suspender over a cotton shirt and as short as to expose at the lower end six inches, inches of sharp, slim and narrow shankage.

He became the champion rail splitter of the district and named that title about as much account, as he learned as an agreement made with Mrs. Nancy Miller to split 400 rails for every yard of brown jean. Mrs. Miller with white woman help, that would be necessary to make him a pair of trousers.

He was a good story teller, though his recitals were seldom at the sort considered appropriate to the parlor.

He could make a good speech, too, and got a lot of early practice among the yokels who made up the society of his home.

In 1834 he achieved an ambition and became a member of the Legislature at the age of twenty-five.

He reversed the usual order of things in many cases. After his election to the Legislature he met a man named Coleman Smoot. "Well, you vote for me, Smoot?" he asked. "Sure, and I have voted that for some time. Then you must lend me $200," said Lincoln. "I need some clothes, and if I am a good lawmaker I'll have to walk to the capital." Smoot gave him the $200.

His first sweetheart, Ann Rutledge, is described as having been beautiful. Her death threw Lincoln into a prostration of grief almost insane. He got over it and paid court to another witch a year.

He and Stephen A. Douglas, who later became his political rival, courted the same girl, Mary Todd, and though at this time Douglas was a brilliant lawyer, Miss Todd refused him, saying she wanted to marry a man who could qualify her ambition to go to the White House, and that man was the lanky Lincoln.

The marriage was set for January 1, 1841, but it didn't come off on the scheduled date. The bride was ready and the groom didn't show up. Then there was a delay, and time he was practically out of his mind, and friends took him out of the State to recuperate.

When he came back there was, naturally, a lot of talk. Finally relations were resumed, and the marriage actually took place November 4, 1842.

There were four children—Robert Todd, born August 1, 1843; Edward Baker, born March 10, 1846, and died in infancy; William Wallace, born December 21, 1850, and who died during his father's first year in the Presidency, and Thomas, born April 4, 1853, and who died when he was nineteen years old.

In 1858, when Stephen A. Douglas' term in the Senate was drawing to a close each Illinois was interesting itself to his successor, he and Lincoln agreed to make a joint canvass of the State. Douglas was, but Lincoln gave him a hard spell and made many friends by a title still always popular.

That Lincoln-Douglas campaign was one of the most famous in American political history and drew out attendance that would be a record well worth live. For example, on the subject of secessionists Lincoln said—"It is the sum of all that it is history which is national and freedom which is sectional? Is it a true fact of astronomy or of history that in some places people wouldn't let you proclaim it?"

Wendell Phillips was among those who settled at the Douglas end of the line. Of Lincoln Phillips in on record as remarking—"Who is this fellow Lincoln? Why, he's the original prairie ass."

It was a four headed campaign, that first battle of Lincoln for the Presidency. The presidency democratic candidates were Abraham Lincoln, Stephen A. Douglas and John Bell was the wild Constitutional Union candidate. Lincoln received 1,866,452; Douglas, 12; Bell, 39. The popular vote was—Lincoln, 1,857,610; Breckinridge, 847,953; Douglas, 1,375,157; Bell, 590,631.

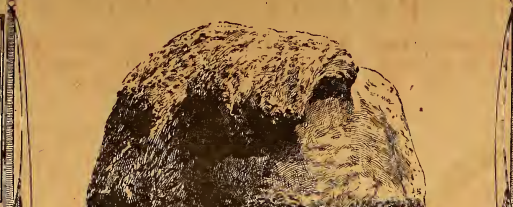
At the outset of his Presidential career he said to a friend—"I shall be the most powerful President. It is marked out by the constitution. I am in no doubt whatever about it."

The first inaugural address contained this clear statement of Lincoln's views:—"The union of these States is perpetual. Perpetuity is implied if not expressly in fundamental law of the Union. Resolves and ordinances to the contrary are void."

There was a certain grim humor even in Lincoln's most serious moves. Then, when the Confederacy sent three envoys to Washington to treat with the government, just as if the Confederacy and been a foreign power, Lincoln received them in turn, but sent them a copy of his inaugural address.

Rigid justice was expressed in this utterance—"We shall not fail—if we stand firm we shall not be forced, except and possess places and property belonging to the government and lying within our limits, and we purpose what is necessary for these objects there will be no invasion, no using of force against or among the people anywhere."

It was Lincoln's dependence upon religion that caused him to issue on July 15, 1863, a thanksgiving proclamation, calling on the people to assemble August 6 to "render the humage due to the Divine Majesty for the wonderful things He had done in the nation's behalf, and invoke the influences of His Holy Spirit to subdue the anger which has produced and so long sustained a needless and cruel rebellion." But Lincoln instituted a permanent National festival on the last Thursday in November for the observance of thanks to God for all its mercies.



This picture of Abraham Lincoln, from the bust by Gutson Borglum, represents the martyred President as he appeared at fifty years of age.

It has the unusual quality of depicting him without a beard, and in regard to this Mr. Borglum said that Lincoln as a man did not wear a beard until, on his way east to his inauguration at Washington, at his train stopped at one of the many way stations that he might speak a few words to the crowds or his enthusiastic admirers who lined the platforms, a little girl, disappointed in her ideal of the future President, asked him why he did not wear a beard.

Lincoln gravely patted her on the cheek and said, "I will," and from that day he allowed his beard to grow, and wore one until the day of his death.

John H. Surratt in Zouave Costume.

Lincoln's signature, from the hotel register of Brown's Hotel, Washington, D. C. Bought from the autograph collection of J. D. Ishemiuser by Robert J. Collier for presentation to President Roosevelt as a souvenir of the Lincoln Centenary.

John Wilkes Booth.